


# KANGRA FORT



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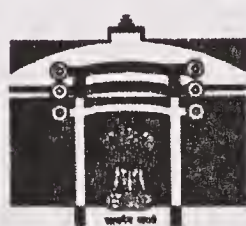


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# KANGRA FORT

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# KANGRA FORT

## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

**S**TANDING MAJESTICALLY ON THE SPUR OF A precipitous hill at the confluence of the rivers Bāṇa Gaṅgā and Māñjhī (also known as Pātāla Gaṅgā), facing the lofty Dhauladhar range of the Western Himalayas almost impregnable, the Kangra Fort, variously known as Nagarakoṭa, Bhīmanagara and Koṭa Kāṅgdā (Kot Kangra), is the chief attraction of the region. It is located just above the Kangra town ( $32^{\circ} 5' \text{ N}$ ;  $76^{\circ} 17' \text{ E}$ ), at a height of 733 metres above mean sea level, in the district of the same name in Himachal Pradesh, one of the oldest districts of the erstwhile Punjab of pre-Partition days. It is merely 26 km from Dharmashala, the district headquarters and the famous hill-station.

Kangra is well connected by road, rail and air. It lies on Chandigarh-Dharmashala National Highway at a distance of 225 km from Chandigarh and can also be approached from Pathankot travelling a distance of 85 km by road. The nearest meter-gauge railway station is Kangra on the Pathankot-Jogindarnagar heritage railway track. The Kangra Airport at Gaggal is located at a distance of about 18 km. The town is famous for the Vajreśvarī Devī Temple, popularly known as Bhawan, lying on the northern escarpment of the Fort, which is considered as one of the important Śaktipīṭhas and traces its origin to hoary past. It attracts hundreds of thousands pilgrims, especially during the Navarātrīs twice a year in April and September. There is a PWD Rest House and some other guest houses in Kangra town. A number of



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private hotels also provide good accommodation to suit the budget of almost all categories of travellers.

The Fort is a Centrally-protected monument under the Archaeological Survey of India. There are two pucca roads, one each from the southern and northern sides, which lead right up to the entrance of the Fort. The monument is open to visitor daily from sunrise to sunset. The site museum housed in the newly constructed building in front of the fort is opened from 10 am to 5 pm except on Fridays and gazetted holidays. A nominal common entrance fee of Rs. 5/- for Indians and Rs.100/- for foreigners is charged for the monument and the Museum from those above the age of 15 years. Tickets can be purchased at the booking counter located at the entrance gate. Photographs and other details of the monument and the exhibits in the museum are available on the payment with the office of the Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Shimla Circle, Shimla and the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, Janpath, New Delhi-110011.

## II. BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

THE REGION BETWEEN THE RIVERS RAVI, BEAS and satluj, in which lies the present day district of Kangra, was known as Trigarta i.e. 'the land watered by three rivers' in ancient times. It finds mention in the famous *Ashtādhāyāyī* of Pāṇini, the *Mahābhārātā*, the *Bṛihatsaṃhit* of Varāhamihira as well as in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa. Copper coins of *circa* second century BCE bearing the legend *Trakata Janapadasa* meaning '(coin) of the Trigarta Republic' have been discovered from the region and substantiate the literary evidence. The region was also known by the name of Jālandhara. Āchārya Hemachandra, the celebrated Jain writer, in his *Abhidhāṇchintāmjaṇi* specifically stated the two as synonyms when he says *Jālandharas-Trigartāḥ-syu ḥ* (iv. 24). The Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zang also visited the region in 635 CE and found fifty Buddhist monasteries here with two thousand monks. He mentions Jālandhara as its capital. Both Trigarta and Jālandhara find mention in several of the *Purāṇas* and in the inscriptions from the region as well. Jālandhara finds mention as the capital of the region whereas the city of Kangra is referred to as Suśarmapura in the Baijnath temple inscription of 1204 CE.

The earliest evidence of human activity in the Kangra region goes back to the Early Stone Age when man was still in the stage of hunter-gatherer as a large number of Palaeolithic tools such as cleavers, hand-axes, discoids, ovates, etc., have been discovered from places such as Dehra, Gopipur, Guler, Dhaliara, Haripur and Kangra in the valley of the Beas. Further development of man into food producer agriculturist



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is evidenced in the region with the discovery of Neolithic tools such as celts, axes, chisels, picks and ring-stones found from Rorh near Haripur.

Of the early historic period, there are evidences in the form of some epigraphs, two of which are datable to the beginning of the Common Era. The first comes from Kanihara, a village on the banks of the rivulet Chauran, some six km from Dharmashala. The bilingual rock inscription in Brāhmī as well as in Kharoshthī script reads *Kṛishṇāyaśārāmā*, thus referring to a garden or monastery built by *Kṛishṇayaśa*. The second epigraph also bilingual and belonging to the same period comes from Pathiar on the bank of the rivulet named Buner, about 15 km from Kanihara. It refers to the foundation of a tank by an individual named Vayula. A fragmentary Buddhist inscription on the stone pedestal, apparently of an image, was reported from Chari by Alexander Cunningham who assigned it to *circa* seventh century CE. Two brass image inscriptions were discovered from Fatehpur in the Nurpur Tehsil of the Kangra District. The first is on the base of an inlaid image of the Buddha, now in the collection of the Lahore Museum and the second is on the pedestal of the image of Vishṇu-Vaikunṭha housed at present in the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. Both the inscriptions are assignable to *circa* sixth century CE. The *Rājataranginī* of Kalhaṇa refers to Trigarta being conquered by kings of Kashmir from time to time though a specific reference to the Kangra fort is missing. One such king of Trigarta mentioned by Kalhaṇa was Prithivīchandra who was defeated by Śaṅkaravarman in the last quarter of the ninth century CE. Another king named Induchandra married his daughter to king Ananta of Kashmir (1028-1063 CE). It is generally presumed that a clan of Kaṭoch Rajputs, to which



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the later Rajas of Kangra belonged, occupied the region sometime after seventh century CE and ruled till almost the present time with a chequered history.

The tradition ascribes the construction of the Kangra Fort to Suśarmachandra soon after the end of the *Mahābhārata* war. His name figures in the genealogical rolls (*Vaśāvalī*) of the Kangra rulers as the 234<sup>th</sup> ruler of the dynasty, which has no historical basis whatsoever but he seems to be an historical person as Kangra was known as Suśarmapura according to the epigraphic evidence. The archaeological evidence from the fort does not go earlier the eighth-ninth century CE. The earliest recorded reference to the Kangra fort comes from the Muhammadan chroniclers, who describe the invasion and plunder of Nagarakoṭa by Maḥmūd of Ghazna in 1009 CE. Utbi, the court historian of Maḥmud, who accompanied the latter during his invasions of India, gives an account of the booty that Maḥmūd acquired from this place. He puts the figure as 70, 000 royal dirham, 700,000 gold and silver ingots weighing 400 man besides a very large quantity of precious jewels, a house measuring thirty yards by fifteen yards entirely made of silver, a silk canopy measuring 40 yards by 20 yards that rested on four poles two each of gold and silver with inlay work besides a large quantity of other precious articles. Slightly later, Farishta has given the figures as 700,000 golden *dīnāra* in place of *dirham* which formed the common currency of the period and was made of silver. He has likewise inflated the other figures also, but the account of Utbi being contemporary appears to be more reliable. His pragmatic statement about the wealth of Nagarkoṭa has a deep bearing on the antiquity of the fort. He observes, “accumulation of years, which had attained such an amount that the backs of camels would not carry

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it, nor vessels contain it, nor writers hands record it, nor the imagination of arithmetician conceive it". It is obvious that it must have taken centuries to amass such wealth in Nagarkoṭa. The antiquity of the place is further attested by the statement made by another contemporary scholar Al-Beruni that the genealogical roll of the Indo-Scythian kings of Kabul for sixty generations existed in the fort. Maḥmūd is said to have desecrated the temple of the goddess there and left the fort in charge of a garrison which was driven away by the Hindu Rajas of the region in 1043 CE after a siege of four months. A new idol was installed in the temple in place of the image that was carried away by Maḥmūd.

For the next three hundred years the fort remained under the local Hindu rulers till it was again captured by Muḥammad bin Tughluq in 1337 CE. The Baijnath inscription of Śaka year 1126 (1204 CE) talks of one Jayachandra, the king of Jālandhara, as the overlord of the region and further tells that before him Hṛidayachandra was the ruler. Since there is no separate mention of any king of Kangra (Suśarmapura) it is evident that the latter was under the rulers of Trigarta during this period. The Hindu rulers regained the control of Kot Kangra following the death of Muḥammad bin Tughlūq in 1351 CE for a short while till it was invaded again by Framrūz Shah Tughluq sometime between 1361 and 1370 CE. An account of the invasion is given both by Ferishta and Shams-i-Siraj. Both of them record that the fort being very strong and secure was besieged by Framrūz. After a long siege of six months he was happy to return to Delhi with the submission of the local ruler, whose name is given as Rūpachandra by a later writer Mānik Chand in a poem composed in 1562 CE during the reign of Raja Dharmachandra. The fort was now left in charge of a Muḥammadan garrison of the Delhi Sultan.



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In 1388 CE, Muḥammad Shah, the son of Framrūz Shah Tughlūq took refuge in Nagarakoṭa when he was pursued by Ghiyā thu' Din Tughluq II. The next glimpse of the history of Kot Kangra is to be had from the Jwalamukhi *praśasti* in the Vajreśvarīdevī temple called *Bhawan*. The ruling king Saṁsārachandra I son of Karmachandra mentioned in this inscription owed allegiance to Muḥammad Shah (1434-1445 CE). the Sayyid emperor of Delhi. Alexander Cunningham is of the view that the fort continued in the Muḥammadan possession throughout this period but the above reference indicates that the local Hindu rulers only acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of the Sultans of Delhi and were independent for all practical purposes. This is attested to by the fact that Sher Shāh Suri sent his trusted general Khawas Khān to conquer the infidels and bring the hill country of Nagarakoṭa under his subjection around 1540 CE. The *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki* tells that not only Kangra was conquered but the temple of the goddess was again desecrated.

From the middle of the sixteenth century CE we have almost uninterrupted history of Kot Kangra. When Akbar ascended the throne in 1556 CE, Dharmachandra was the ruler of Kangra. Akbar had received his subjugation but allowed him to retain the fort. Upon his death in 1563 CE his son Māramikyachandra became the ruler and was succeeded by his son Jayachandra. Akbar was suspicious of his activities and sent Khān Jahān to invade the country. Jayachandra was thus imprisoned and his son Bidhichandra rebelled against the Mughals. Khān Jahān laid siege to Nagarakoṭa in 1573 CE. The Mughal commander is said to have constructed a mosque in front of Jayachandra's palace. Bidhichandra again rebelled in 1588-89 CE but submitted before the Mughal Commander Zain Khan and was taken to Delhi. He was



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restored to his kingdom later on the condition of leaving his son Triloka Chandra as hostage in Delhi Durbar. The Kaṭoch rulers of Kangra managed to retain the fort till 1621 CE, when it was ultimately conquered and occupied by Jahāngīr after a siege of fourteen months with the help of some other hill chiefs. There is a popular story that talks of the cause of enmity between the Raja and Jahāngīr because of the ownership of a parrot but it does not appear to be a sober fact of history. Hence onwards the Kangra fort remained under the Mughals till the last quarter of the eighteenth century with a permanent Muḥammadan garrison stationed there. Jahāngīr had appointed Nawāb Alī Khān as commander of the stronghold. During the reign of Shah Jahān, Asad Ullah Khān and after him Nawab Kalli Khān were given the charge of the fort. During the reign of Aurangzeb the fort of Kangra was successively put in charge of Sayyid Hussain Khān, Hasan Abdullāh Khān and Sayyid Khalilullah Kr ān. During this period several temples were demolished. It was during his reign that the Kaṭoch king Chandrabhāṇa Chandra, the grandson of Triloka Chandra, raised the standard of rebellion against the Mughal occupation of his territory. He gave a tough resistance but was eventually captured and sent to Delhi. After the death of Aurangzeb the fort remained under the Mughal governors till Adinā Beg was appointed the *Faujdār* by Ālamgīr Sani. Adinā Beg made himself virtually independent but after the invasion of Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī in 1757 CE openly defied the Mughals. The Mughal force sent against him was defeated at Sirhind and all the hill states including the Muḥammadan governor of Kangra became his tributaries. Rājā Saṁsāra Chand, the new chief of Kangra, who ascended the throne in 1775 CE, was an ambitious person and is said to have invited the Sikh chief Jai Singh

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of Kanhaiya *misl* to invade Kangra fort. The siege was laid in 1783. During the siege, the already feeble hold of the Mughals suffered another setback as the old governor Saif Alif Khān died. The fort was captured by Jai Singh who kept it for himself. In 1787 Jai Singh was obliged to handover the fort to Samsāra Chand, in lieu of some territory in the plains, due to intervention of other Sikh chiefs. Thus, after a long occupation, Kangra fort once again came in the possession of the Katoch rulers, though only for a short period. Rājā Samsāra Chand now came into conflict with neighbouring hill chiefs such as Rāja Singh of Chamba, Dharma Prakāśa of Sirmaur, Prakāśa Chand of Guler and Īśvarīsenā of Mandi and defeated them one by one strengthening his position and enlarging his territory by 1792 CE. The Gorkhas of Nepal were expanding their power at this time and had already reached the east of Satluj under Amar Singh Thapa. They were now instigated by some disgruntled hill chiefs to invade Kangra. The Gorkhas took full advantage of the opportunity and invaded Kangra. The Raja took shelter within the stronghold of fort and was besieged by the invaders for four long years. Samsāra Chand found it difficult to handle the situation and out of desperation sought help from the Sikh chief Ranjit Singh. The latter took full advantage of the situation and granted help on the condition of getting the fort in return. Samsāra Chand agreed in the treaty of 1809 signed at Jwalamukhi. The Gorkhas were defeated and chased out across the Satluj. Ranjit Singh now appointed Dessa Singh Majithia as the *kiledār* of Kangra and *nāzim* of the hill states. Samsāra Chand's position was gradually reduced to that of a subordinate chief of the Sikh *durbār* and the state of Kangra was never able to regain its lost prestige again. After the first Anglo-Sikh Treaty, the Kangra fort passed in to the hands of



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the British in March, 1846. A British regiment was stationed in the fort to garrison it and remained stationed till 1905. The fort suffered immense damage in the earthquake of 4<sup>th</sup> April 1905 and has remained unoccupied since then.



### III. THE FORT

**K**ANGRA FORT, SURROUNDED ON THREE SIDES by inaccessible cliffs, is an imposing structure of stone occupying a narrow strip of land between the fork of the two rivers, Bāṇa Gaṅgā and Māñjhī, its outer walls being about four kilometres in circuit (Pl. I). The high, almost perpendicular, stone walls which surround the fort give the monument a majestic awe-inspiring look at its being impregnable. There is a deep moat along the outer walls of the fort between the two rivers, across the ridge which is the only accessible way to the fort. Before the entrance to the fort, is a sprawling garden. The new building of the site museum is constructed on the left. As one enters the garden there is a water spring *baolī* attached with a medieval structure, the Ḥammām or the bathing chambers. The temple shaped niches behind the *baolī* that once enshrined images of Hindu deities attest the existence of this water source since the pre-Muhammadan times (Pl. II). Further to its right on an elevated ground is a cemetery of the British period.

The fort is entered through a small courtyard enclosed between two imposing gateways popularly known as Phāṭaka or simply 'The Gate' followed by 'Ranjit Singh Darwāzā' (Pl. III; fig.1), after the name of the builder Mahārājā Rānjit Singh, on the other side of the courtyard. An inscription atop the gate attests this fact (Pl. IV). From here a long narrow passage leads to the top of the fort through a number of other gateways with strong ramparts and watch towers on the right side (Pl. V). While ascending through the passage one

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passes through two gates called Āhani Darwāzā or the 'Iron Gate' and Āmīrī Darwāzā or the 'Nobles' Gate' (Pls. VI-VII; figs.2-3). Both these gates were constructed by Nawāb Alif Khan, the first Mughal governor of Kangra under Jahāngīr. As one moves along the passage and takes almost a U-turn at a sharp angle, one faces another gateway called Jahāngīrī Darwāzā (Pl. VIII; fig.4) said to have been constructed by the Mughal emperor after his victory of the fort. The passage continues upwards beyond this gateway taking a turn to the left after a small distance till it reaches the Andherī Darwāzā, so named because it led to a long tortuous dark vaulted passage towards the palace area. This 'Dark Gate', also called Handelī Darwāzā, is now a mere lofty arch as the vaulted passage has disappeared long ago. Turning left at the end of this small passage one ascends a couple of stairs to reach Darśanī Darwāzā or the 'Gate of Audience' which is flanked by two much worn out images of the river-goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā standing on their respective vehicles *makara* and *kachchhapa* (Pl. IX; fig.5).

This entrance provides access to the inner part of the fort leading to the terrace known as the 'Temple Complex'. On the right side of this terrace is a large courtyard with cells on two sides along the walls. On the southern side on an elevated platform are the remains of temple(s). Only the back wall of the structure, which had at least two halls with four pillars in the centre, having numerous profusely carved images in the niches and recesses on the outer side has survived. They are now called Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa and Śītalā Mātā temples (Pls. X and XI). When Alexander Cunningham visited the fort in 1872-73, these structures were standing in the form of two small rooms without any pillars or pilasters. He compared them with the Baijnath and Sidhnath temples at Baijnath but



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observed that nothing is known about them and one of the rooms is known as “*Rasui* or the kitchen”. J. Ph. Vogel who made a survey of the fort after the devastating earthquake of 4<sup>th</sup> April 1905, however, observed the existence of ornamental pillars and pilasters in the structure, the bases of which still exist. It is possible that after the Muhammadan occupation of the fort the structure was converted and used for secular purpose, hence the name *Rasui*.

Separated by a passage with a staircase on the right side of the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa temple is another group of small temples. Known as the temple of Ambikā devī, it has three Jain shrines besides that of the goddess Ambikā devī. Most of the shrines in the group are small insignificant structures of later period with some ancient architectural members that may have been reused. The temple is east-west oriented and is entered through an ante-room that may be called *maṇḍapa*. The pillars and architraves of this room appear to be quite early and may be assigned to *circa* ninth century CE. Originally it must have been an open twelve- Pillared pavilion with a corbelled roof. The room to the south houses an image of Ādinātha (Pl. XII) bearing a dated inscription of *Samvat* 1523 (1446 CE) on its pedestal. To the east of this complex can be seen the remains of another early medieval temple of about ninth-tenth century CE. Two huge pillars, some torus mouldings and an altar stand testimony to the past glory of this structure. Besides, the base of another temple has been unearthed in the northern corner of the complex. During the period of the British occupation of the fort some barracks were constructed at this level on the eastern side of the complex.

An arched passage with a narrow staircase known as Mahalon-kā-Darwāzā, sometimes called the Śhīśh Mahal



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Gate (fig.6), between the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa and Ambikā Devī temples leads to the uppermost level of the fort that contained the palace-complex but now lies in complete ruins. The existence of a number of guard-rooms on both sides of this gate vouches for the high-level security that must have been provided to the palace-complex. A huge water tank and remains of the kitchen area can be seen here(fig.7). On the top is a ruined pillared pavilion. On the extreme west along the topmost ramparts is a watch tower that provides a panoramic view of the valley and has strategic significance to keep an eye on the movements outside the fort for a long distance. An arched opening with steep stairs towards the east is said to have led to a tunnel that went straight up to the bed of the Māñjhī River.

The northern side of the fort has some late structures of varied description which seem to have been added from time to time. The details of these structures have been taken separately in the next chapter.

#### IV. MONUMENTAL REMAINS

**V**ERY LITTLE HAS SURVIVED BY WAY OF structural remains in the Kangra Fort after the devastating earthquake of 1905. A brief description of various structures inside the fort has been given in the previous chapter dealing with its architecture. However, for the curious visitor a more detailed account of some important monuments in the fort is given here for easy location of each monument.

**1. Phāṭak, the main entrance gate:** Located along the moat and approached over a bridge, the façade of the gate, constructed during the reign of Mahārājā Ranjit Singh (fig.1), shows an arched opening with octagonal bastions at sides followed by irregular walls along the hill crest. The arched opening with wooden gates is topped by battlements having machicolations. An inscription written in Gurmukhī script is affixed on the top. The entrance is followed by an irregular courtyard having a gateway on the other end with two cells, one on each side. A staircase on the south leads to a platform above. The wooden gates here are now missing but the Gurmukhī inscription on the top of this gateway provides the name of the Sikh conqueror Ranjit Singh and the date *Samvat* 1873. Two fragmentary inscriptions in Persian script are also fixed on the side of this inscription.

Next comes Āhani Darwāzā followed by Āmīrī Darwāzā (figs. 2-3). Both are arched openings with battlements and machicolations on the top. The first has two guards' chambers, one on each side and before the second there is another guards' room within the fortified wall on the left with an inscription recording its renovation in 1878 CE. Four late

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images, Hanumāna on the top and below that Gaṇeśa on the left, a deer in the centre and Mahishāsurmardinī on the right are fixed on its façade.

Taking a U-turn on the path is Jahāngīrī Darwāzā (fig. 4) with three arched openings facing south and oriented east-west. It has chambers towards the west of each arched opening. A staircase towards west from here leads to guards' cells on the top whereas the path towards the east leads to a courtyard. A horse stable once located to its south has almost completely vanished.

The next noteworthy gateway is Darśanī Darwāzā at the entrance to the temple and palace-complex (Fig.5). Supporting the Gaṅgā and Yamunā images on the door jambs, a vacant niche on the *lalāṭabimba* on lintel and some *bhāravāhakas* interspersed with lotus motif above, it appears to have been brought from some other place in the fort and fixed here at a later date.

**2. Temple Complex:** On the southern side of the courtyard, as already noted above, are the remains of early medieval temples popularly known by the name of Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa and Śītalā Mātā temples. The first of these, a square chamber with base of four pillars in the centre, is approached through a flight of steps in the north. It had balcony openings on the east and west. There are five niches on each of the surviving walls at *jaṅghā* level surmounted by *Nāgara* style *śikhara* carved in relief. The walls are profusely decorated with the rows of swans (*haṁsas*), half-lotus (*ardhapadma*) and figures of *apsarās* besides images of deities including some incarnations of the god Viṣṇu. Floral scrolls and geometric designs cover the entire surface of the walls. It had a stepped



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pyramidal roof which is now gone. The second temple is similar to the first one.

The second group of three small temples on the left of the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, with a passage dividing the two, known as the temple of Ambikā Devī is a late structure with a crude dome above. The only ancient portion seems to be the ante-chamber with pillars and architraves and a corbelled roof, which serves as *maṇḍapa* having openings on the north, west and south. The sanctum is rectangular in shape and houses an image of Ambikā devī. Another image of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkara Ādinātha dated VS. 1523 is enshrined and under worship in a side room. Two identical small Jain shrines on the south with pyramidal roof face west. The three-tiered door frame of the northern shrine has floral, geometrical and attendant figures. The *lalāṭabimba* on the lintel has a Jain figure flanked by those of Gaṇeśa and Lakshmī. The base of the altar in the shrine has figures of lions and elephants. The southern temple has a four tiered door frame with a row of seated Jain Tīrthaṅkaras besides the usual floral and geometric designs. Images of the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā have been carved on both sides. There is a similar altar base with the lion and elephant figures on the eastern wall as in the earlier shrine and a niche each on the northern and southern side. There are some images fixed on the wall facing east opposite the Jaina shrines. Of these, note may be taken of an image of six-headed Kārttikeya seated on peacock in *ardhaparyāṅkāśana-mudrā*. The four armed god carries *śakti* in his back right hand and a bell in the left back hand. The front right hand is in *abhaya* posture and the front left hand rests on his folded leg. Next to it is a standing image of Śiva and Pārvatī. The four-armed god has a trident in back right hand and an indistinct object in the front right

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hand. One of his left hands is on the back of his consort and the other is broken. Pārvatī is shown two-handed with her right hand in *abhaya*. An animal which looks like a wolf or dog is shown on the right of Śiva's feet, which is a rather curious feature. Images of Viṣṇu and Brahmā are shown in niches on the top of the image. The third image on this wall is that of Narasimha incarnation of Viṣṇu. On the adjacent wall facing north there are images of seated Viṣṇu, Varāha and Gaja-Lakshmī. These images may be assigned to *circa* tenth century CE.

Ruins of several other temples can be seen on the eastern and northern sides of the complex. Two carved pillars (Pl. XIII) and a lintel with the figure of Gaṇeśa (Pl. XIV) in the centre can be seen in these remains.

**3. Palace-Complex:** It occupies the top level of the fort and comprises of several small chambers on both sides and a pillared pavilion on the top. Not much of any note has survived here though it must have formed the most important part at one time (Pl. XV). A huge water tank (fig.7) with underground terracotta drains here reflects skill in hydraulic technology of the time. The lime-plastered walls and remnants of floors provide an idea of the buildings but no traces of any murals, for which Kangra is so famous, have been found.

**4. Phānsī Ghar:** On the right of the path leading to the back of the fort, near Andherī Darwāzā, At a little distance from the *PhānsīGhar*. down the pathway is an oblong structure facing north meant for the execution of criminals, thus known as Phānsī Ghar. It is a simple structure with walls rising straight to the height of 12 m and open on the top. An arched opening and octagonal bastions are provided on the northern side.



## MONUMENTAL REMAINS

**5. Mosque:** Are the remains of a mosque facing east (Pl. XVI). The simple structure is north-south oriented with a *mihrāb* in the centre of the western wall flanked by two arched niches on either side. It has similar arched niches in the northern and southern walls as well. The structure is assigned to the time of the Mughal emperor Jahāngīr in the first quarter of the seventeenth century CE.

**6. SūkhāTālāb:** Located little further on the northern side is large rectangular water reservoir with steps on all sides going down to the bottom of the pond, where probably a natural spring existed (Pl. XVII). Built on the stepped pattern of such reservoirs, it had some sculptures on the corners. Since there is no water in the reservoir, perhaps for quite some time, it has acquired the name Sūkhā Tālāo or the dry pond.

**7. Magazine:** This is a small triple-chambered structure, facing south-east, located along the pathway on the backside. Its façade has an arched entrance flanked by false niches on each side. The main chamber is a square structure having two small chambers joined through narrow openings on either side. It has domical roof with niches on all the four sides.

**8. Bārādarī:** Located slightly to the south of the pathway leading down to the back of the fort is a ruined square with nine chambers and twelve openings. All the chambers are inter-linked with arched openings supported by thick walls made of *lakhaurī* bricks bonded and plastered with lime mortar.

**9. Kapūr Talāb:** The pathway leading down to the back of the fort terminates towards the south near a big reservoir called the Kapūr Talāb. The square tank has steps leading down on three sides – north-east, south-east and south-west. It has two pillared gates, one of which has a big mounted



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slab with the image of seated Vishṇu with *chaurī*-bearer. Drains from all sides lead to a water chute located in the middle of the eastern wall of the tank. A well is located on the south-east corner. The tank is a fine specimen of water harvesting system. Its origin is obscure as the identity of its excavator is unknown.

**10. Hammām and Go-mukha:** Located to the north of the main gate outside the entrance to the fort is a triple-chambered rectangular structure facing south (Pl. XIX). The medieval building is popularly known as Hammām and was obviously built for the bathing purpose, perhaps for the royalty, next to the water source known as Go-mukha. The latter is a rectangular tank, about two metres deep with steps on the north-east corner. The northern wall has ten niches for images, with miniature *nāgara* style shrines in relief, which are now empty. Atop the central niche is the figure of a *bhāravāhaka* holding a carved inlet for water. This part definitely belongs to the pre-Muḥammadan period, when the Hammām was built adjacent to it. The small rooms of the Hammām have skylights in the roof and are interlinked with small openings. Windows have been provided in the southern wall. The room on the east has a small tank for bathing.

## V. INSCRIPTIONS AND SCULPTURES

**M**OST OF THE INSCRIPTIONS RECOVERED FROM the fort are still *in situ* on the gateways and have been referred to above. They comprise two Gurmukhī inscriptions of the Sikh period at the entrance.

The one on the Ranjit Singh gate records the name of the Sikh ruler and the date Samvat 1873 (1815-16 CE). Another fragmentary inscription in Persian script is also fixed by the side of the inscription mentioned above. J. Ph. Vogel had published another Persian inscription from the fort ascribed to the time of Jahāngīr, which he thought was once fixed atop the Jahāngīr gate. This inscription along with another Sanskrit inscription is now in the Lahore Museum. In the temple side complex in the fort there is an inscription dated Samvat 1523 on the pedestal of the Ādinātha image made of black stone which is still under worship. On the left side of the entrance gate of the fort are some graffiti inscriptions left by earlier visitors. Similar graffiti inscriptions can also be seen near Darśanī Darwāzā. A large number of dressed stones also bear masons marks.

An inscribed pedestal of a Jain image (Pl. XX) of Ṛishabhanātha bearing an inscription in nine lines early Nāgarī characters is displayed in the museum. It has images of two lions, one each on both sides of the front face, indicative of simhāsana. Behind it on the left is the *aksha* Gomukha and the right side has a female figure to be identified as that of yakshiṇī Chakreśvarī. The inscription records the installation of the image of Jina on Sunday, the third day of



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the bright fortnight of the month of *Phālgunain ŚakaSamvat* 1110 (1188 CE). A three lined crude stone inscription is also displayed in the museum. Except for the date *Samvat* 1823 (1766 CE) given in the second line nothing can be made out. The first line probably had the name ending in *Vīra*. The third line is illegible. An image of four-armed Gaṇeśa (Pl.XXI) seated in *ardha-paryāṅkāśana*, wearing a crown, *yajñopavīta* carrying *aṅkuśa* and *danta* in right hands and snake and *modaka* in the left, assignable to fifteenth-sixteenth century CE is displayed in the museum. Another late image of the deity can be seen atop the door on the left side near Āhani gate. An early specimen of the Gaṇeśa image of *circa* ninth century CE is seen on the *lalāṭabimba* of a broken lintel lying in the temple complex. The four-armed image shows the god seated in *paryāṅkāśana* with usual attributes.

Next are the images of Viṣṇu from the fort. The most important is perhaps the *sthānakamūrti* of four-handed Viṣṇu (Pl.XXII) made of grey stone with a very fine lustrous polish. The image is shown standing in *abhaṅga* posture flanked by Gadādevī and Śaṅkha-puruṣa on his right and left respectively. They can be identified by the mace and conch held in the hands of Viṣṇu above the head of the figures. The front right hand with a lotus is in *abhaya* posture and the fourth which must have held a *chakra* is broken. This arrangement of attributes shows that the image is Achyuta form of Viṣṇu. The image is shown wearing a tall *kirīṭamukūṭa* and other ornaments. A single pearl string adorns his neck and there are bracelets on the wrists. He is wearing a *dhotī* tied in ornamental style. The charming facial expression shows that the image may be assigned to eighth century CE. A pedestal made of grey sandstone, displayed in the museum, has only damaged figures of *āyudha-puruṣas*



## INSCRIPTIONS AND SCULPTURES

on both sides, which may be identified as those of Gadādevī and Śaṅkhapurusha. Rest of the image is broken and lost. Another four-handed standing image, much defaced, of Viṣṇu with crown and holding mace and disc in the upper right and left hands respectively and the other two hands on the head of the flanking figures of *āyudha-purushas* may be assigned to *circa* tenth-eleventh century CE. Two identical pieces of broken door-jambs or pillars in the museum are interesting as one has the image of seated Viṣṇu (Pl. XXIII) and the other that of Śiva (Pl. XXIV). The first image shows four-armed Viṣṇu seated in *ārdha-paryāṅkāśana-mudrā* with a reclining human figure under his left leg. He wears a crown, *Vanamāla* and ornaments and carries a mace and *chakra* in his back hands. The front right hand is in *abhaya-mudra* and the front left is broken. Below in the damaged portion only the crown of the deity under a banyan tree is visible. The second piece has an image of Śiva seated on his vehicle Nandi in *ardha-paryāṅkāśana-mudrā* wearing a crown of matted hair. The four-handed deity has trident in the back right hand and the front right is in *abhaya*. He holds a rosary in the front left hand and a shield in the back left. Below this image is seen the head of a deity, with rest of the image being broken, under a beautiful tree. The deity wears a crown under which beautifully arranged curly hair is visible. Both these pieces may be assigned to the ninth-tenth century CE.

An architrave (Pl. XXV) of grey sandstone displayed in the museum that may be assigned to tenth century CE shows three faces. The central one is that of Śiva with matted hair, the one on the left is feminine and may be identified as that of Pārvatī and on the right side is the fierce form of the god. Another architrave of the same period but much worn out

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shows the central face as that of Śiva wearing his hair in the form of a turban. Both the side faces are damaged but the one on the left shows hair tied on the top. A last image in the museum depicts Śiva in *ardha-paryāṅkāśana-mudrā* with Pārvatī seated on his left and Nandi is shown seated below (Pl. XXVI). Śiva carries a trident in his right hand and the left is behind his consort. He wears his hair in the shape of a crown. Pārvatī wears a long skirt and has her right hand on Śiva's shoulder. Some images of goddess are also displayed. In one worn out four handed image Durgā is shown seated on lion in *ardha-paryāṅkāśana-mudrā*. She has a trident in her back right hand and a flower in the upper left hand. Her lower right hand is in *abhaya-mudrā* and a bowl is held in her lower left hand. Another image of a goddess standing in *dvibhaṅga* posture holding a lotus with long stalk in her left hand and an indistinct object in the right hand is shown. She wears a crown and her hair in a bun on the side. The image may be dated to the ninth-tenth century CE. An image of the eight-handed goddess Mahishāsuramardinī carved on a bracket can be seen amongst the pieces displayed in the front garden. She is shown in fierce posture as trampling over the demon.

The image of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkara Ādinātha in *dhyāna-mudrā* with its head broken is shown seated with an attendant on the right carrying a fly-whisk. *Yaksha* Gomukha and *yakshiṇī* Chakreśvarī are shown below on either side (Pl. XXVII). Besides these there are a number of other beautiful pieces like those of *apsarās*, a devotee, a *bhāravāhaka*, some musicians playing on drum, lute, dancing, etc. Most of these figures are carved on brackets and pillars.



## VI. THE MUSEUM

THE MUSEUM BUILDING STANDING IN THE FRONT of the Kangra fort (Pl. XXVIII) was set up in 2001 for an easy access of the visitors and inquisitive researchers to the years of accumulation of antiquities especially inscriptions, sculptures and architectural members found from various parts of the fort from time to time. While full attention has been given to scientific display of the objects, efforts have been made to make the exhibits interesting and educative for the general people and lay visitors. For the purpose heritage articles of the region such as stone tools of Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods, silver and copper coins found in the region, some miniature paintings and manuscripts were collected and put on display along with stone sculptures and architectural members. Full scale replica of the rock inscriptions from Kanihara have also been displayed in the front of the museum building.

The stone tool collection is represented by hand-axes, discoid, ovate and chopper-chopping tools found mostly from Guler and nearby sites. The silver and copper coins on display include coins commonly known as the bull and horseman type coins of Trigarta rulers and other kings, the Katoch rulers, Muslim rulers of Delhi, the Sikh coinage of the time of Ranjit Singh and some coins of the British period. Stone sculptures and inscriptions from *circa* eighth century CE onwards form the bulk of displayed collection. Casts of some precious objects like an inscribed bronze image of the Buddha and a stone inscription in Brāhmī script which were carried away more than a century back and are presently in



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the collection of the Lahore Museum are also on display. The stone sculptures found from the fort mostly comprise of the Vaishṇava, Śaiva, Śākta and Jaina images. No Buddhist image has come to light from within the fort so far. Some of the pieces are described for a general understanding of the heritage on display.

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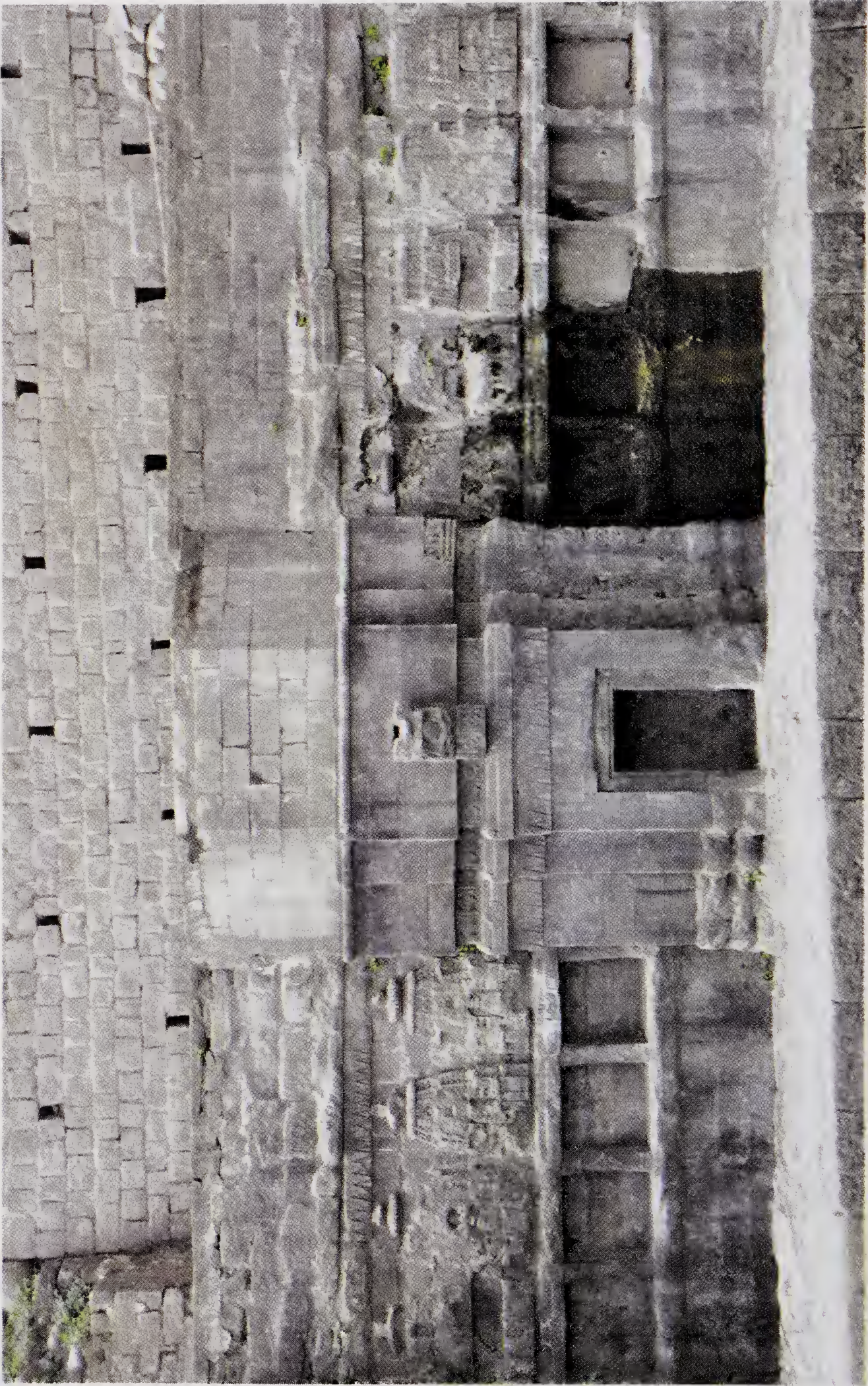
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General View of the Fort





Temple shaped baolī





Main Phātak of Ranjīt Singh Darwāzā





Inscribed slab atop of the gate





Rampart and watch tower



PLATE VI



Atrini Darwāzā





*Amīrī Darwāzā*





*Jahāngīrī Darwāzā*





*Darśanī Darwāzā*





Lakshmi-Narāyaṇa and Śitalā mātā Temple, front view





Lakshmi-Narayana and Sitala mātā Temple, back view





Ādinātha Īmage





Monolithic carred pillars & architectural members.





Ganeśa in altabimba





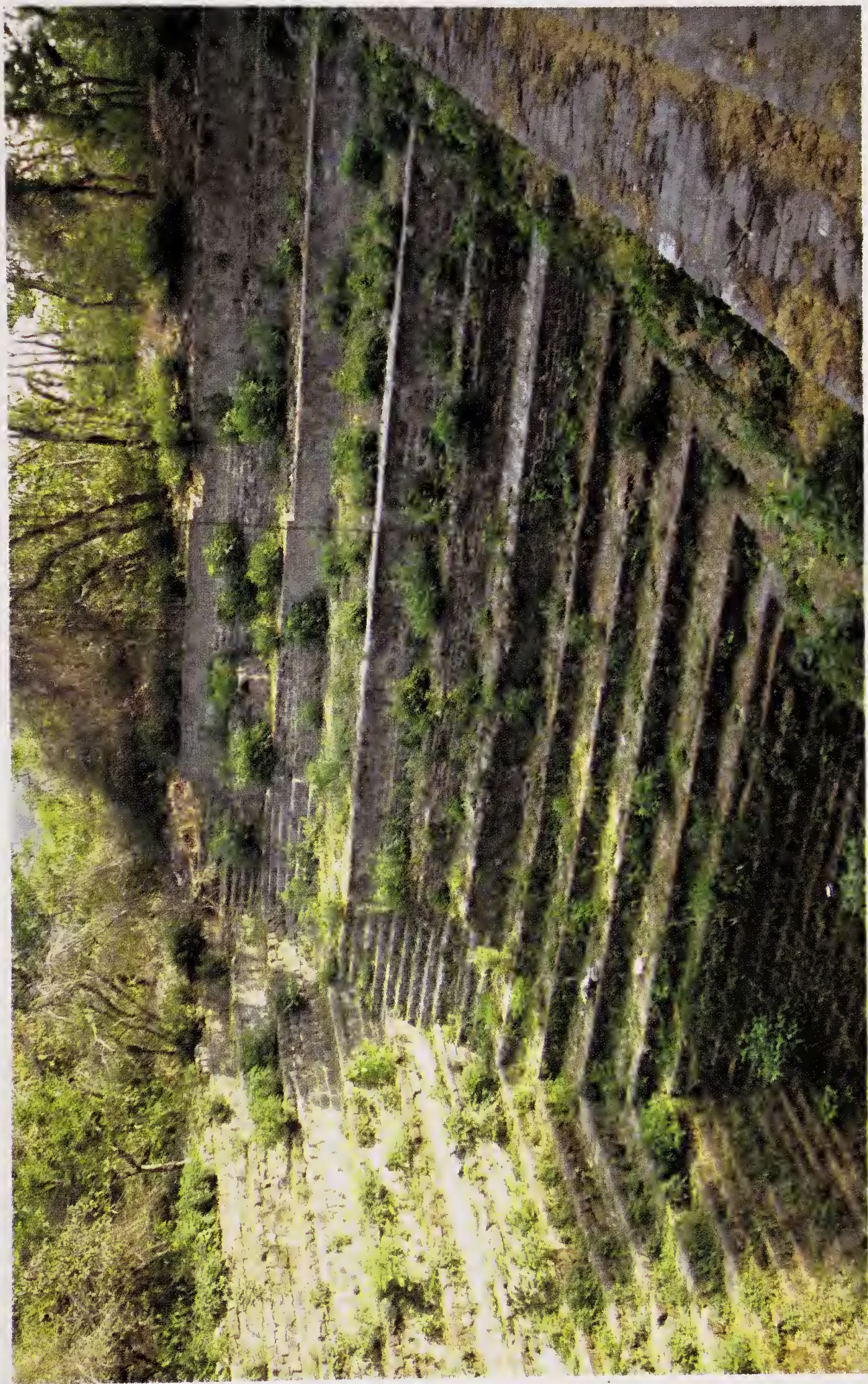
Ruined Palace Complex





Ruined & Mosque





*Sūkhā Talāb*





Inscribed pedestal





Four armed Gaṇeśa



PLATE XX



Vishnu





Seated image of Vishnu





Śiva on Nandi





Architrave





Śiva and Pārvatī





Image of Jaina Tirthankara





Front view of Museum









**Archaeological Survey of India**